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19 February 1964

Copy No. C 10-1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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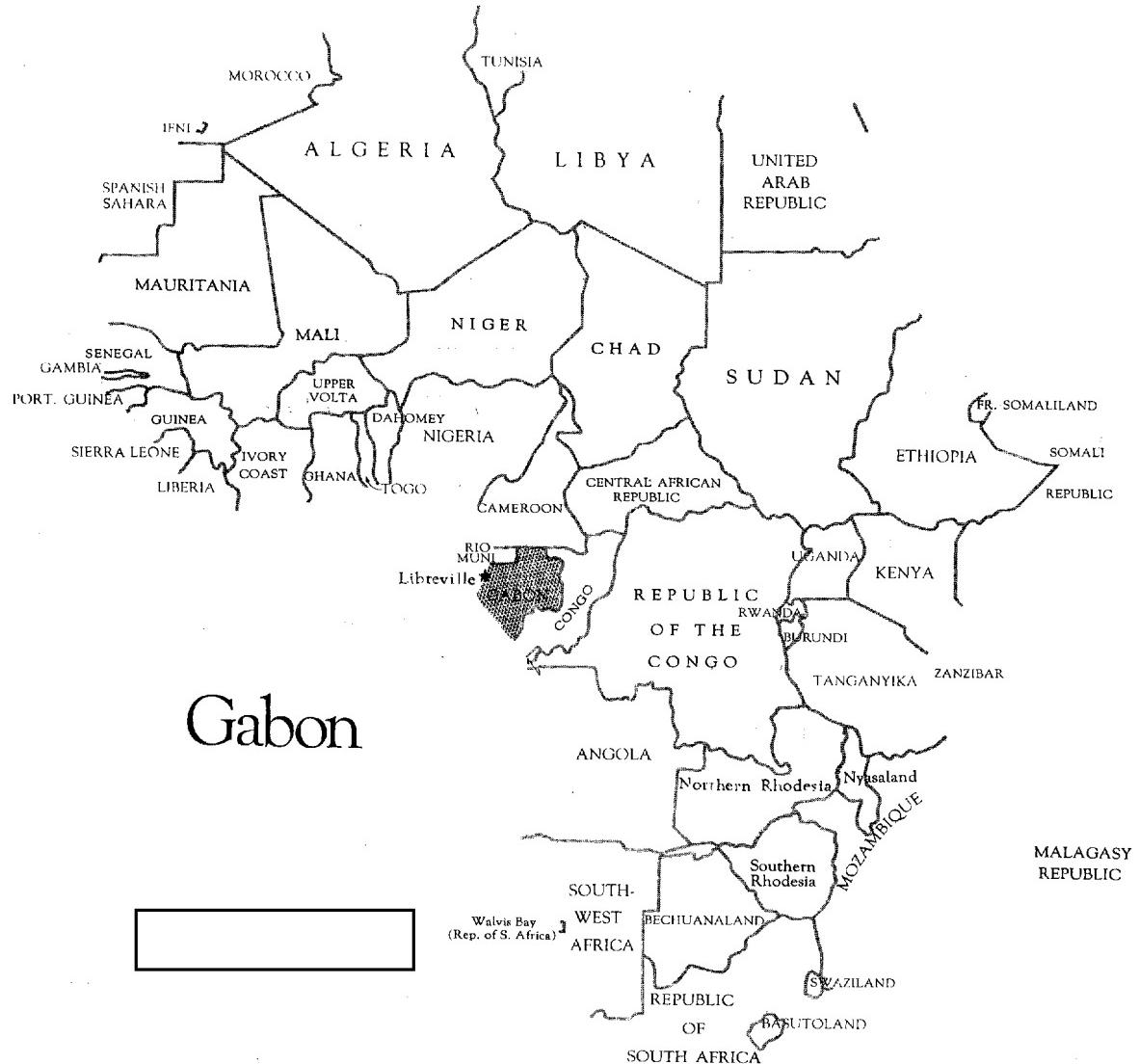
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Gabon

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*Gabon: [The military coup against moderate President Leon Mba on the night of 17-18 February has resulted in an unsettled political situation in which a former political rival of Mba has now apparently taken over the dominant political role.]

[The highest authority in Gabon at present appears to be a newly formed "Revolutionary Committee" made up of six army officers and led by Lt. Jacques Mombo, the alleged coup leader. Mombo, however, has seemingly withdrawn to a purely military role after naming a provisional government reportedly headed by moderate former Foreign Minister Jean-Hilaire Aubame.]

[Aubame--a long-time political rival of Mba's-- is generally considered to be critical of the French, but pro-Western and favorably disposed toward the US. He apparently now fears that the French will intervene to restore Mba.]

[The French maintain 200 troops in Libreville and have reportedly brought in reinforcements from Congo (Brazzaville), Central African Republic and Senegal. The US Embassy in Paris feels that the French Foreign Office does not regard the coup as similar to the August Congo (Brazzaville) revolution during which the French stood aside while ex-President Youlou was overthrown. The embassy feels that the possibility of French intervention on behalf of Mba cannot be excluded.]

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Bolivia: President Paz is being challenged by another group within his party.

Several prominent members of the ruling Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR), including Communists and elements of the right, have formed a faction within the party opposing Paz and separate from the supporters of Vice President Lechin. The catalyst for this development is their common dissatisfaction with the Paz-Fortun ticket nominated at the recent MNR convention.

The group is led by former President Hernan Siles Zuazo, who has ambitions to return to office. It includes air force commander Barrientos who lost out in the race for the vice-presidential nomination at the MNR's recent convention.

The group is said to have two main tactics. One is to pressure Paz into adopting a new electoral system allowing any number of persons within the party to run for president and vice president. The second is to annul the recent expulsion of Vice President Lechin and others from the party as another way to weaken Paz.

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NOTES

Common Market - Nationalist China: Paris has thus far failed to go along with other members of the EEC in accepting Taipei's request of mid-January for approval of its ambassador-designate to the EEC. The Nationalists have hoped that EEC accreditation would restore some of the prestige they lost in Europe following France's recognition of Communist China.

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OAS-Panama: The members of the special OAS commission investigating Panamanian charges of aggression against the US feel that the Chiari government is still determined not to enter bilateral negotiations with the US unless it is assured that revision of the Canal treaties is a topic for consideration. At least one member of the committee thinks that it may now be necessary to convene a foreign ministers' conference as a last-ditch maneuver to prevent the matter from passing to the United Nations.

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